AN

HUMBLE and FREE

ADDRESS

To the Most Noble

PRESIDENT,

The Right Honourable and Worthy

VICE-PRESIDENTS,

Governors, Trustees, and Guardians

OF THE

FOUNDLING-HOSPITAL.

LONDON:

Printed for J. NOON, at the *White Hart* near *Mercer's* Chapel, *Cheapside.* M.D.CC.XLIX.

Price, 8d

BRITISH MUSEUM

My LORDS *and* GENTLEMEN,

WHILE the Genius of this Nation was depreſſed by a Religion which enſlaves Mankind, diſhonours GOD, and deſtroys Virtue, all our Acts of public Liberality were vain, ſelfiſh, and ſuperſtitious. To expiate our Sins, we contributed to ſupport in Idleneſs and Luxury great Numbers, who having renounced Society and all relative Duties, were a growing Burden upon the Community.

But ſince the Reformation has baniſhed Ignorance and reſtored Chriſtianity, we have nobly diſtinguiſhed ourſelves by Donations of another Kind, ſuch as are truly ſtiled Charities; for it is ſurely an Exerciſe of that moſt Chriſtian Virtue, to heal the Sick, feed the Hungry, cloath the Naked, and inform the Ignorant.

Among theſe, the raiſing a Fund for maintaining and educating expoſed and deſerted young Children, appears to be the moſt excellent, with reſpect to its Objects, its Motives, and its Uſe.

The Objects of this Charity, are thoſe alone who ſuffer by the Faults, Follies, or Indigence of others; and who conſequently have the ſtrongeſt Claim to the Benevolence of Mankind.

The Motives muſt be diſintereſted, becauſe thoſe who receive the Munificence cannot ſo much as acknowledge the Obligation.

Its Uſe is moſt important and extenſive, as the Number of the uſeful Hands are not only imme-

diately increaſed by the Number of Children thus preſerved, but their Deſcendents will be free from Diſeaſes which are propagated by almoſt all the loweſt Claſs of Mankind, who are brought up in Want, Naſtineſs, and Iniquity. See *Gent. Magazine*, Vol. 17. page 136.

You, therefore, the worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital, have condeſcended wiſely and nobly in taking this Truſt and Government into your immediate Protection and Care, which expreſſeth your Diſpoſition and Ability to relieve and befriend Mankind, in the Aſſiſtance and Direction you give to a Charity ſo well calculated to advance the Honour and Proſperity of your Country.

Every honeſt Man who views its Conſtitution and Eſtabliſhment in a true Light, conſiders the Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital as Benefactors to himſelf; in which Character the Writer of this Letter humbly preſumes to expreſs his Gratitude, and to tender the beſt Contribution in his Power, when he beſpeaks the Notice and ſubmits to the Judgment and Determination of the worthy Truſtees and Governors, the Fruits of his private Enquiry and Conviction, concerning the Rectitude and Importance of one Article in the Execution and Management of this wiſe and laudable Truſt, which is preſumed to be under your Cognizance and Direction.

The Rank and Character of the noble and worthy Truſtees and Governors, are not ſuſceptible of the leaſt Suſpicion of Diſhonour in your Management of the moſt diſintereſted and generous Charity; and the ſame generous Security which juſtifies and encourageth this public Application, will determine its Succeſs in Proportion to the Strength

and

and Importance of the Evidence with which it may appear to be ſupported.

The Occaſion and Subject of this Addreſs, are made notorious by Obſervations on a Paragraph in Mr. *White*'s ſecond Defence of his Letters, firſt publiſhed at large in the *General-Evening-Poſt*, *July* the *5th*, 1748. and ſince extracted from that Letter in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, Vol. 18. p. 316. in the Words following, *viz.* —— 'Mr. *White*, p. 28. 'ſays, the Ground of Infants being received to 'Baptiſm, is in our Church, as it ought to be in all, 'the Promiſe of God to Believers and their Seed. 'But the Children in the Foundling Hoſpital cannot 'be known to be the Seed of Believers, and may 'be the Offspring of Mahometans, Jews, or pro-'feſſed Infidels.'

From this Fact and Mr. *White*'s Aſſertion, theſe Conſequences follow.

Infants have been received to Baptiſm, twenty at a Time, altho' unknown to be the Seed of Believers. Theſe Children ſo long as they are ignorant of the Character and Faith of their Parents, muſt remain uncertain of their Right to Baptiſm, or Part in its Privileges.

All Infants who have been or may be received to Baptiſm, not having this neceſſary and unattainable Qualification, are excluded from the divine Promiſe, and their Baptiſm is ineffectual, notwithſtanding the ſacred Character of the Baptizer, and the Diligence and Fidelity of their Sureties.—But that Mr. *White*'s Opinion may not be thought to be that of the Church; and that the Diſquietudes in which Multitudes muſt be involved by the Conſequences which thus manifeſtly follow from it may be prevented,

The following Account of the Ground of Infants being received to Baptiſm, is inſerted, as expreſſed in the two Offices for adminiſtering public

and private Baptiſm to Infants, according to the Authority and Uſage of the Church of *England*.

Foraſmuch as all Men are conceived and born in Sin, and that our Saviour Chriſt ſaith, none can enter into the Kingdom of God except he be regenerate and born anew of Water and of the Holy Ghoſt; as alſo in this brief Exhortation upon the Words of the Apoſtle, *viz.* 'Beloved, ye hear 'the Words of our Saviour Chriſt, that he com-'manded the Children to be brought to him, how 'he blamed thoſe who would have kept them from 'him, how he exhorteth all Men to follow the Ex-'ample of their Innocency.'

In this Extract Mr. *White*'s Aſſertion being notoriouſly falſe and miſtaken, its manifeſt Conſequence can be no Prejudice to the Fact relative to the Foundling Hoſpital.

But the Iſſue which belongs to the Province, and on which the worthy Truſtees and Governors are humbly deſired to give Judgment, is the Authority and Juſtification of this Fact, from the Words and Records of the Chriſtian Lawgiver, as they are quoted in the Office, and applied according to the Preſcription and Uſage of the national Church of *England*, under your immediate Cognizance and Direction.

It has not eſcaped the Penetration and Judgment of the worthy Truſtees and Governors, that the very Ground and Reaſons expreſſed in the Office preſcribed by the Church of *England* for the Baptiſm of Infants, are founded on the Admonition given to all Men by our Saviour Chriſt, to imitate the Example of their Innocence who are declared at the ſame Time to be conceived and born in Sin. But whereas the palpable Abſurdity of theſe two contradictory Reaſons, can be admitted by no Perſon who believes the perfect Character of Jeſus Chriſt, and the

the Truth and Credit of his Inſtitution; this is premiſed as a fair Preſumption for the Negative of this Queſtion, the poſitive and final Determination of which, in the Judgment of the Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital, is reſted on the Evidence which ſhall be brought in Proof of the Truth and Importance of the following Propoſitions.

1. *Prop.* Not one direct Precept or Example can be produced from the complete and only authoritative Records of the New Teſtament, to direct or juſtify this prevailing Practice of Infant Baptiſm.

2. *Prop.* The Infant Children, even of believing Parents, are manifeſtly incapable as well of the perſonal Qualifications which are previouſly demanded, as of the conſequent Benefits which are poſitively annexed, in the Word of God, to the reaſonable and profitable Diſcharge of this Chriſtian Duty.

3. *Prop.* As the total Silence of God's Word leaves no poſſible Room to countenance or juſtify this Practice, ſo the Voice of the ſacred Oracles has moreover very clearly and loudly declared againſt it.

If in the Sequel of this Scrutiny, you ſhall find theſe Allegations to be ſeverally true, and concluſive againſt the Practice of Infant Baptiſm, the Author of this humble and free Addreſs confides in your Honour, that this Rite and Inſtitution of the Chriſtian Lawgiver will be permitted no longer to be miſapplied to incapable Subjects, the expoſed and deſerted young Children under your immediate Cognizance and Direction.

The Practice of Infant Baptiſm is pleaded to be groundleſs and arbitrary, inaſmuch as not one direct Precept or Example can be produced from the complete and only authoritative Records of the New Teſtament, to direct or juſtify this Practice.

The

The particular Obligation of the ſeveral Inſtitutions and Duties which are only diſcoverable and preſcribed by an extraordinary Revelation from Heaven, depend ſolely upon the Will and Authority of the Legiſlator, by whom theſe poſitive Duties are enacted and given; and where no Precept or Example appears in the Revelation itſelf, we can have no proper Direction or Authority to act in ſuch inſtituted Worſhip.

As Chriſtians we are forbid expreſly to call any Man Maſter upon Earth, for one is our Maſter even Chriſt, *Matt.* xxiii. 10. and both the Duty and Benefit of this great and happy Relation, require us to reject every Thing as the Impoſition and Traditions of Men, which upon our reaſonable and fair Enquiry, appears not to our Minds to be the revealed Doctrine and Commandments of God.—— As Proteſtant Chriſtians we believe and declare the Perfection and Sufficiency of the New Teſtament of our bleſſed Saviour, and every Man with his own beſt Judgment and Ability, muſt ground his Faith and conform his perſonal Worſhip and Obedience to this only authoritative and Scripture Rule, before he can acquire the juſt Character and Satisfaction of walking in all the Ordinances and Commands of his Lord blameleſs.

Whoever does knowingly or raſhly adulterate this compleat and ſtanding Revelation of the Will of God to Mankind, becomes hereby chargeable with a deſigned or formal Invaſion of the ſole Prerogative and Juriſdiction of the Son of God, and of converting his moſt excellent and ſalutary Religion into a blind, endleſs, and hurtful Superſtition——— But what Proviſion could be more ſolemn or effectual to guard the Diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt from their criminal Neglect or ſuperſtitious Abuſe of his Goſpel, than their due Regard to that moſt awful Charge

Charge which is given to every Chriſtian, which manifeſtly and equally reſpects the whole Goſpel Revelation, and which we find very pertinently recorded by the Apoſtle *John*, in the very laſt Chapter and Verſes which conclude the Holy Bible? *For I teſtify to every Man who heareth the Words of the Prophecy of this Book, if any Man ſhall add unto theſe Things, God ſhall add unto him the Plagues that are written in this Book.—And if any Man ſhall take away from the Words of the Book of this Prophecy, God ſhall take away his Part out of the Book of Life, and out of the Holy City, and from the Things which are written in this Book.—He who teſtifieth theſe Things, ſaith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even ſo come, Lord Jeſus.* Rev. xxii. 18—20.

If then we covet the great Improvement and Satisfaction of receiving and obeying the Inſtitution of our Lord's Baptiſm, with our Minds well informed and rightly diſpoſed; and that their Guilt and Danger may never come upon us who careleſsly neglect, or criminally abuſe this poſitive Rite and Duty of our holy Religion, it is certainly both wiſe and neceſſary that each Believer of the Chriſtian Revelation ſhould both read and hear the New Teſtament of Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and ponder well what is offered by others, to aſſiſt his farther and better underſtanding of it, with his Mind prepared to embrace indifferently whatever the Word of God ſhall thus make known to him, as the Object of his perſonal Faith and Worſhip, or the Rule of his preſent Life, and final Judgment.

This certainly is the plain and neceſſary Way to make us all both intelligent and practical Chriſtians, when with our ſteady and upright Reſolution we determine our whole Profeſſion and Behaviour by what we have carefully found, and can plainly ſhew to be our Chriſtian Duty, preſcribed for our perſonal

nal Uſe and Benefit in his own New Teſtament, by the Wiſdom and Authority of our common Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

Wherefore the Man who contents himſelf with that Baptiſm which has been impoſed upon him in his Infant State, or by whoſe Influence and Direction the ſame Ceremony is impoſed upon others, before he has carefully ſought and found in the ſacred Scriptures themſelves, any reaſonable Evidence to convince and ſatisfy his own Mind of the Authority or Lawfulneſs of this Practice——He cannot pretend (with any Appearance of Reaſon or Sincerity) to have fulfilled the Intention and Duty of this Goſpel Ordinance: But ſo long as he ſhall continue to neglect this neceſſary Inquiry, or ſhall refuſe to follow that Senſe of his Duty which it may create in his own Breaſt, he muſt needs involve himſelf in the Folly and Guilt of neglecting the Authority of the Chriſtian Lawgiver, and of excluding himſelf (careleſsly or wilfully) from the juſt Satisfaction and Improvement which might have accrued to him from his perſonal and voluntary Obedience to this divine and profitable Inſtitution.

Your humble and faithful Monitor proceeds with a better Expectation from your Honour and Independency, to recommend and ſubmit to your Scrutiny and Judgment (in the ſame Light in which they have appeared to his own) the Pleas which are commonly taken from the Rite and Practice of Circumciſion in the Old Teſtament, and alſo from the Hiſtory of the Perſons who are reported in the *Acts*, and by the Miniſtry of the Apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt, to have been baptized, together with their whole Families. Which Pleas being urged in order to excuſe or juſtify the Adminiſtration of Chriſtian Baptiſm to the infant Children of believing Parents, will be relative to the Truſt and Management of the

the expoſed and deſerted young Children in the Foundling-Hoſpital, ſo far only as this their Relation to believing Parents can be ſpecified and known to you the worthy Truſtees and Governors.

'Tis notorious that the Uſe which Chriſtians of the Pedobaptiſt Perſuaſion would eſtabliſh upon the ſuppoſed Analogy between the Rite of Circumciſion and Chriſtian Baptiſm, is intended to ſhew the Regularity and Duty of introducing to the Privileges of the Chriſtian Church, by the Rite of Baptiſm, the Infant Offspring of Chriſtian Parents; in like Manner as they ſuppoſe the Infants of Jews and Proſelytes to have been inveſted with the Privilege, and received into the Pale of the *Hebrew* Church, by the Rite of Circumciſion. Whereas the leaſt diſintereſted Attention may be ſufficient to ſhew theſe two Caſes to be totally different and unequal.

For beſides the plain and repeated Command of *Jehovah* to oblige the Circumciſion of the Infant Jew in the Old Teſtament, and the total Silence of the Chriſtian Lawgiver, which forbids the Impoſition of his Baptiſm to the Infant Seed of his Diſciples——the very Deſign and End of the ancient Rite of Circumciſion is in this Argument quite miſtaken and groundleſs, and all the Superſtructure which has been made to depend upon it muſt conſequently fall in Pieces. Circumciſion was not, nor could it poſſibly be, the diſtinguiſhed Rite and Badge which intitled or introduc'd their Male Infants to the Rights and Privileges of the Jewiſh Church; foraſmuch as theſe ſame Privileges did equally belong and were inveſted in their Female Offspring, to whom that Rite was impracticable: And moreover, becauſe this Rite of Circumciſion proceeded and continued in uſe, by divine Appointment, Four hundred and thirty Years before the Exiſtence of the Jewiſh Church, and the firſt Adminiſtration of its

Privileges and Worſhip, in the Prieſthood of *Aaron*, as we learn exactly from St. *Paul*'s Chronology, *Gal.* iii. 17. and the plain Hiſtory of the Old Teſtament.

Circumciſion was widely diſtinguiſhed from Chriſtian Baptiſm, inaſmuch as it was a Rite merely mechanical, demanding no previous moral Qualification; nor was it accompanied with any preſcribed Confeſſion of the Faith, or Penitence of the Subjects who were appointed to receive it. And on both theſe Accounts it was equally practicable to be adminiſtered to a Male Infant of eight Days old.

Circumciſion was indeed a ſenſible and appointed Token of the Promiſe and Covenant which *Jehovah* was pleaſed to give perſonally to *Abraham*.——Not only that his numerous Deſcendents ſhould be marvelouſly conducted and upheld in their Poſſeſſion of the good Land of *Canaan*, (Gen. xvii. 8. and 11.) but alſo of this unſpeakably greater and better Promiſe, That in the Seed of faithful *Abraham* (which Seed is Chriſt) even all the Nations of the Earth ſhould be bleſſed, *Gen.* xxii. 18. *Gal.* iii. 8, 9, 16.

Moſt wiſe was the Proviſion, and remarkably happy the Effect of this paſſive and mechanical Rite, which diſpoſed and obliged the numerous Families incorporated in the *Hebrew* Commonwealth, to preſerve with religious Care and Exactneſs the Genealogies of their reſpective Tribes and Families, in the Male Line, of whom, concerning the Fleſh, Chriſt came; for the better Security and Satisfaction of all the Nations who are bleſſed in his Name, who now experience and rejoice in the wonderous and happy Accompliſhment of the Promiſe given and renewed perſonally to the righteous Patriarchs, and recorded ſome thouſand Years ago in the Hiſtory of *Moſes*: By the Accompliſhment of which Grace, and Faithfulneſs of the Father Almighty, we are all

at

at this Day enriched, as well with the better Inſtructions, as the more glorious Hopes of the Goſpel of his beloved Son.

Theſe Remarks, it is humbly preſumed, will be ſufficient, in the Judgment of the worthy Truſtees and Governors, to manifeſt the true Nature and End of the particular Rite of Circumciſion; together with the Fitneſs, no leſs than the Authority of its Application to an Infant. Whereas the particular Nature and End of this Jewiſh Rite bears not the leaſt Similitude to the very different Inſtitution and Uſe of the Chriſtian Baptiſm. Nor is there recorded in the New Teſtament of Jeſus Chriſt any one Precept or Example, from whence any direct or fair Concluſion may be drawn to juſtify or countenance the Application of this evangelical Rite to an unintelligent or unbelieving Subject.

Whatever Action is done under the Notion and Pretence of Religion, but without a reaſonable and ſolid Conviction of our Maker's Appointment and Acceptance, anſwers the true Character and preciſe Meaning of Superſtition; which cannot be juſtified, or eſteemed a reaſonable or profitable Service, either in the Perſon or Perſons by whoſe Influence or Miniſtry ſuch an Action is done, or in the Subjects to whom it is applied. And if we may not be allowed to call this Superſtition, ſurely there never was, nor can be any ſuch thing.

But this Charge can never faſten on the wiſe and good Inſtitution of our Lord's Baptiſm, who himſelf has ſolemnly guarded againſt this manifeſt Corruption and Abuſe of his Ordinance, by demanding the perſonal Faith and Conviction of all his baptized Diſciples, when in Virtue of all Authority, which was then given to him both in Heaven and in Earth, he commanded his Apoſtles expreſsly, and without Exception, to preach his Goſpel to every

Creature, *Mark* xvi. 15. and to teach the People of all Nations, whom he appointed them to baptize, concluding with theſe Expreſſions, *Teaching them to obſerve all Things whatſoever I have commanded you*, Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. And yet more diſtinctly in *Mark* xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptized ſhall be ſaved.*

And by comparing the Subſtance of our Saviour's larger Diſcourſe to his Apoſtles on this Subject, as we find abridged and recorded in the Evangeliſts *Matthew* and *Mark*, every unbiaſſed Mind may be well ſatisfied that the expreſs Intention and Appointment of Chriſt himſelf was, That none ſhould be eſteemed and treated as fit Subjects of his Baptiſm, who, at the ſame Time, were not the capable Subjects of Chriſtian Inſtruction. But whoever profeſſeth himſelf a Diſciple of Chriſt, and becomes a Member of his Church, by the ſolemn Rite and Obligations of Baptiſm, muſt firſt believe and acknowledge the Authority of the Chriſtian Lawgiver, as the very Nature and End of this Inſtitution moſt plainly require.

But if in this Caſe the Mind of *Chriſt* had not been ſufficiently expreſſed in the Words of his own Inſtitution, it is moreover fully explained and certainly determined, in the Declarations and Practice of his inſpired Miniſters, who unqueſtionably knew, and have faithfully executed, the Intention of their perſonal Commiſſion.

Theſe authoritative Guides and Pillars of the Chriſtian Church have fairly and unanſwerably ſhewn us (as well in their Doctrine as by their Practice) what was the Mind and Will of their great Maſter in this Particular: And the plain Direction and Authority of their Word and Example ought ſurely to determine the Conduct of all ſucceeding Miniſters in their Adminiſtration of Baptiſm.——In reading

reading the Hiſtory of the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, we ſhall there find them always, and every where, to have firſt preached Chriſt, and converted Men to the Belief of his Goſpel, before they called upon them to teſtify their Reverence and Affection to their Lord and Maſter, by being baptized in his Name; and that they demanded and received from their Converts a perſonal and voluntary Acknowledgment of their Faith in the Son of God, before they did or would adminiſter to them his inſtituted Rite of Baptiſm.

Of this important Fact it may be ſufficient to take one plain Example and deciſive Authority, out of a Multitude which is quoted from the ſacred Hiſtory of the *Acts of the Apoſtles* of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, Chap. viii. from 35 to the 39th Verſe.

Then Philip opened his Mouth, and began at the ſame Scripture, and preached unto him Jeſus.

And as they went on their Way, they came unto a certain Water, and the Eunuch ſaid, See here is Water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?

And Philip ſaid, If thou believeſt with all thy Heart, thou mayeſt. And he anſwered and ſaid, I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God.

It will be needleſs to point out to the Notice of the worthy Truſtees and Governors what is ſo diſtinctly expreſſed in the Text itſelf, *viz.* That the Eunuch was firſt inſtructed concerning *Jeſus* by the preaching of *Philip*. He then deſires to be baptized, in conſequence of his own Conviction, and in Obedience to the Authority of Chriſt's Inſtitution, in whom he believed. The inſpired Evangeliſt yet ſuſpends his Requeſt, and declares it to be lawful and right upon this Condition only, *If thou believeſt with all thy Heart*. And then at laſt he baptized this Eunuch upon this open Confeſſion from his

own Mouth, 'I believe that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God.'—What Words can more fully and plainly expreſs the Neceſſity of previous Inſtruction, and a perſonal Confeſſion of Faith, to qualify Men for the due Reception of the appointed Rite of Baptiſm, than theſe Words which paſſed between the Evangeliſt *Philip* and this Treaſurer of the Queen of *Ethiopia?*

And not only in this but in many Paſſages of the ſacred Hiſtory, we find plainly that the inſpired Miniſters of our Religion did firſt inſtruct Men in the Knowledge of the Truth, before they called them to the Profeſſion of Chriſtianity; and that they inſiſted on a perſonal Confeſſion of the Faith of their Converts, before they did or would baptize them into the Name of the Lord Jeſus---And whereas no Mention is any where made in the Code of the New Teſtament, that this Ordinance of Chriſt was ever adminiſtred to any Perſon who did not firſt declare his Conviction, and acknowledge the Authority of the Chriſtian Lawgiver; it is from hence a fair and juſt Concluſion, that to believe with the Heart and to confeſs with the Mouth, that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God, is a neceſſary and appointed Qualification, to adminiſter the Chriſtian Baptiſm with due Authority, and to receive it with Profit and Acceptance.

But the Caſes of thoſe Perſons who are reported in this ſacred Hiſtory to have been baptized with all their Houſhold, may be ſuppoſed more relative to the Baptiſm of the expoſed and deſerted young Children in the Foundling Hoſpital, and beſpeaks the particular Attention of their worthy Truſtees and Governors.

And yet even in theſe Caſes alſo they are no leſs expreſly declared to have been all inſtructed in order to their Conviction, and convinced in order to

their

their Baptiſm: And whoever conſults the whole Account of theſe baptized Families, and compares together the ſeveral Particulars of their ſacred Hiſtory, will there find that they did all attend to the preaching of the Apoſtles Doctrine. They did all rejoice, they all believed, and accordingly they were all baptized.

On St. *Peter*'s firſt Sermon, you read of three Thouſand who gladly received the Word, and were baptized: But among all theſe, together with the Multitudes who were afterwards converted to the Chriſtian Faith and Profeſſion, by the Doctrine and Miracles of our Lord's Apoſtles, we read of no more than three Perſons (through the whole Goſpel Hiſtory) who are there ſaid to have been baptized together with their whole Families, and with any ſuch diſtinguiſhed Circumſtances; from whence it may be preſumed, whether all the Members of theſe baptized Familes were capable of a perſonal Faith and Profeſſion of the Chriſtian Religion, or not, *viz.* *Cornelius* the Centurion, *Lydia* a Seller of Purple, and the Jaylor to whoſe Cuſtody *Paul* and *Silas* were committed by the Magiſtrates of *Philippi*. Of *Cornelius* it is affirmed expreſly, that he was a devout Man, who feared God with all his Houſe, *Acts* x. *ver.* 2. That they were all preſent before God to hear all Things that were commanded *Peter* of God, *Acts* x. *ver.* 33. That while *Peter* was ſpeaking what God had commanded, the Holy Ghoſt fell on all them who heard the Word, *Acts* x. *ver.* 44. Upon which extraordinary Teſtimony of their Faith and Acceptance, he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord, *Acts* x. *ver.* 48. Of *Lydia* a Seller of Purple, it is not ſaid that ſhe and all hers were baptized, but more generally, that ſhe was baptized and her Houſhold, *Acts* xvi. *ver.* 15. And as no Inſtruction can be taken from

from the ſacred Hiſtory, whether any in her Family were incapable of a perſonal Faith and Profeſſion, it is moreover quite improbable that any ſuch Perſons were taken with her in her Journey from the City of *Thyatira* to *Philippi* to ſell Purple, as is related in *Acts* xvi. from the 12*th* to the 16*th* Verſe. Of the Keeper of the Priſon at *Philippi*, it is declared poſitively that *Paul* and *Silas* ſpake unto him the Word of the Lord, and to all who were in his Houſe, *Acts* xvi. 32. And that he rejoiced, believing in God with all his Houſe, *Acts* xvi. 34.

So that to the diſintereſted and worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital, it will, I hope, appear, that theſe three Scripture Examples are the moſt plain and flat Contradiction to the Practice which modern Chriſtians have too confidently fathered upon their miſtaken Authority, which by no Means juſtify, but expreſly condemn the Application of Chriſtian Baptiſm to the Children of Believers, before they have acquired the ſame Belief, and made the ſame perſonal and ſolemn Profeſſion of their Faith and Obedience to the Chriſtian Lawgiver---Or in other Words, that they believe with all their Hearts that Jeſus Chriſt is the Son of God.

But as this Practice of Infant Baptiſm is thus diſcountenanced by the total Silence of God's Word, ſo it is moreover incompatible with the moral Qualifications and Benefits which are annexed to the true Chriſtian Baptiſm in the Scripture Hiſtory and Inſtitution.

This is the ſecond Propoſition or Argument which the Author of this humble Addreſs begs Leave to recommend to the farther Scrutiny and Judgment of the worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital, *viz.*

That

That the Infant Children of believing or unbelieving Parents, are manifeſtly and equally incapable, as well of the perſonal Qualifications which are previouſly demanded; as of the conſequent Benefits which are poſitively annexed in the Word of God to the reaſonable and profitable Diſcharge of this Chriſtian Duty.

The Character and Indulgence of the noble and honourable Perſons, to whoſe Scrutiny and Judgment the Evidence and Force of this Argument is humbly addreſſed, may permit the Author to meaſure the moral Intention and Utility of this Rite and Duty of our excellent Religion, by the conſummate Wiſdom and Benevolence of the Chriſtian Lawgiver.---Yes, the Words of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt expreſs a Doctrine which is (in all its Branches) according to Godlineſs, 1 *Tim.* vi. 3. And the Author of this humble Addreſs begs Leave to enumerate the ſeveral great Privileges, Benefits, and Encouragements, which he has collected from the moral Nature and Tendency of this evangelical Inſtitution, and which are moreover poſitively annexed by the Word of God, to all the intelligent and worthy Receivers of Chriſtian Baptiſm, even to the End of the World.

1. This poſitive Rite of our Holy Religion becomes the perſonal Duty, and will adminiſter a juſt and proportionate Satisfaction to every Believer who receives it as the Teſt and Expreſſion of his Obedience to the Authority and Inſtitution of the Chriſtian Lawgiver, according to the beſt Direction of his own Underſtanding, and in Obedience to the Demands of his own Conſcience.

2. The Maintenance and Increaſe of the Chriſtian Knowledge and Profeſſion in the World, is another valuable Deſign and Benefit, which is more

 particularly

particularly and happily anſwered by the fit and continued Uſe of this Rite of our Holy Religion.

3. The Inſtitution and Rite of Chriſtian Baptiſm, is the moſt wiſe and effectual Preſervative againſt the great Danger and the various Miſchiefs of implicit Faith, being well calculated by the Wiſdom and Authority of the Son of God, to make Men Chriſtians upon Principle, who uſe this evangelical Rite according to its plain Nature and profitable Deſign.

4. To all Perſons who uſe it with a right Underſtanding and a pious Diſpoſition, this Rite of Chriſtian Baptiſm is moreover the wiſeſt and beſt Means to make Men practical, as well as intelligent Chriſtians, to fix deep in their Minds the ſeveral Principles of our excellent Religion, and to render them more fruitful in our ſeveral Tempers and Lives. And then, in the fifth Place, the Believers and Profeſſors of Chriſtianity are incouraged to diſcharge this Duty of our Holy Religion, with a joyful Expectation and Aſſurance of the Remiſſion of all their Sins preceding the Time of their Baptiſm---whenever we receive it in this preſcribed Manner, and with our penitent and worthy Diſpoſition.

Theſe five Particulars contain the right Uſe and important Benefits which will evermore accrue to every Believer, who uſeth the Rite and Inſtitution of our Lord's Baptiſm, with a ſound Judgment and an honeſt Diſpoſition, as theſe ſame great Advantages have ſeverally appeared, to the plain Conviction and the joyful Experience of the Author of this Addreſs.

But leaſt this humble Eſſay ſhould ſwell into a Volume, the Author begs Leave to relieve your Patience with his ſolemn Aſſurance, that the leaſt publick Intimation of the Pleaſure of the worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital, ſhall

ſhall ingage him in the important, but long neglected Task, of collecting and exhibiting from the ſacred Records of the Word of God, the ſeveral Scripture Authorities and Examples, which illuſtrate and prove the gracious Intention and important Uſe and Benefits of this Rite and Duty of revealed Religion, which upon a fair Scrutiny will be found to have been, for many Ages, but little underſtood and leſs regarded.

In the mean Time, it may be wiſe and equitable to preſume the Truth and Authority of the ſeveral Allegations we have advanced in Favour of Chriſtian Baptiſm, from their great and manifeſt Utility, and to reſt them on the Credit of his All-perfect Character, by whom this Rite of our moſt reaſonable and good Religion has been confeſſedly inſtituted.

But how is it poſſible that the ſame juſt Conſolation and various Benefits can follow the Adminiſtration of Infant Baptiſm, which are reaſonably preſumed to ariſe from the moral Nature and Uſe of this divine and profitable Inſtitution—If, with Truth and Propriety the Chriſtian Baptiſm might be ſaid to be adminiſtered to an Infant, every ſuch incapable Subject cannot however be pretended to receive it in Faith, *Mark* xvi. 16. *Acts* viii. 37. Calling on the Name of the Lord, *Acts* xxii. 16. And ſolemnly avowing hereby his perſonal Duty and Reſolution, to abide by the Duties and Hopes of a Chriſtian to the End of his Life, *Rom.* vi. 3, 4 — By his involuntary Baptiſm the Infant Child of a Believer can never be ſaid to put on Chriſt, who at the moſt (in this arbitrary Way) is but impoſed upon him, *Gal.* iii. 27.— To an Infant this Rite of our Holy Religion can never be made the Teſt or Expreſſion of his perſonal Duty, and no human Foreſight or Ability may be ſufficient to prevent this neceſſary Diſqualification of a baptized Infant,

from growing up into his actual Unbelief, or from increasing and concluding in his avowed Opposition and Enmity, to the true and most excellent Revelation of the Gospel.

The Baptism of an Infant, will not administer that just and proportionate Satisfaction, which is secured to every Believer who receives it as the Test and Expression of his rational and voluntary Obedience to the Authority and Institution of the Christian Lawgiver, according to the best Direction of his own Understanding, and in Obedience to the Demand of his own Conscience.

The Baptism imposed upon an unthinking Infant, must needs be an unlikely and ineffectual Means, to invite the Attention, and to recommend to the Belief and Acceptance of Infidels, the generous Liberty and most excellent Knowledge and Profession of Christianity. —— See *Christianity not founded on Argument.*

It promiseth no good, but threateneth a bad Effect: Instead of causing Men to profess themselves Christians upon Principle, with their own Judgment and Choice, upon reasonable Enquiry and Evidence, and with their avowed Conviction of their Duty and Interest to do so; this glaring Superstition, has on the contrary, a manifest and direct Tendency to introduce and continue the great Danger and various Mischiefs of implicit Faith, and to prevent or lessen their personal and solemn Scrutiny into the Grounds and Constitution of that rational and divine Religion, which well deserves, and expressly demands their wise and upright Examination; but into the Faith and Profession of which they have been taught to esteem themselves, to have been already and insensibly introduced by the arbitrary Customs of this World, and the Wantonness of Superstition.

This

This arbitrary Practice of Infant Baptiſm, muſt needs become dangerous and hurtful to the Perſons on whom it is impoſed, whenever they ſuffer it to ſupercede and prevent their preſcribed Duty, in conſecrating themſelves to the worthy Profeſſion and Practice of Chriſtianity, in the Way which Chriſt himſelf has appointed, and in Conſequence of their own deliberate Senſe both of their Duty and Intereſt; inaſmuch as it deprives and robs them of the moſt promiſing and beſt Means, which the Wiſdom and Grace of our bleſſed Saviour has provided to fix deeper in the Minds of his Diſciples, the ſeveral Principles of our divine Religion, and to render them more fruitful in our following Tempers and Behaviour.

And ſince to an Infant (before he has done any Thing that can be truly called Good or Evil in this World) this Rite and Inſtitution of Jeſus Chriſt cannot poſſibly be made the Baptiſm of Repentance, every adult Believer, who contents himſelf with this deluſive and unprofitable Ceremony, excludes himſelf hereby from the joyful Pledge and Aſſurance of the Forgivenneſs of all his preceding Follies and Crimes, which is given in the Word of God expreſsly to every Believer, whenever he ſhall conſult his Duty and Intereſt, by receiving the true Chriſtian Baptiſm with his penitent and worthy Diſpoſition.

Theſe ſeveral Allegations are evidently relative to the Truſt and Management of the expoſed and deſerted young Children in the Foundling Hoſpital; and if the Truth and Importance of theſe Affirmations are fairly preſumed from the Wiſdom and Benevolence of the Chriſtian Lawgiver, and demonſtrable to the Judgment and Conviction of the worthy Truſtees and Governors, whenever they are pleaſed to call for the Scripture-proofs and Authorities

rities, which illuſtrate and ſupport them; can this evident and important Conviction fail to create in the Breaſt of a ſober and pious Chriſtian, a juſt Diſſatisfaction with that arbitrary and ineffectual Baptiſm, which may have been impoſed upon us in our Infant State? And, on the other Hand, to quicken our Deſires, and to determine our wiſe and pious Reſolution, to receive the true Chriſtian Baptiſm, which is not more our plain Duty than it is our mighty Privilege?

But this Practice and Attempt to apply the Rite and Inſtitution of Chriſtian Baptiſm to Infants, is not only diſcountenanced by the total Silence of God's Word, and incompatible with the moral Qualifications and Benefits we find annexed to it in the Scripture Hiſtory and Inſtitution, but according to the Evidence and Proof of our

3d. *Prop.* The Voice of the ſacred Oracles has even directly and loudly declared againſt it.

If our two preceding Arguments could fail to ſatisfy any Perſon who has fairly conſidered them, it is hoped no poſſible Scruple will remain with the worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital (who believe the Perfection and revere the Authority of the New Teſtament of Jeſus Chriſt) if we ſhall now ſhew farther (to your plain and equitable Diſcernment) that the Plea of Infant Baptiſm is indeed over-ruled, and has been already prejudged to be arbitrary and ineffectual, by the direct Inſtructions and Decree of the Holy Ghoſt, pronounced by the Son of God himſelf, and both repeated and recorded by his inſpired Apoſtles.

But with ſufficient Plainneſs we may ſee with our own Eyes the infallible Decree upon ſacred Record, in *John* i. 11—13.

He came to his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he Power to

to become the Sons of God: To them who believe on his Name—Who are born not of the Blood, nor of the Will of the Fleſh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God.

It is not more clearly revealed in the Goſpel Hiſtory, that God ſent his beloved Son from Heaven immediately to his own peculiar People the *Jews*, (to whom his perſonal Miniſtry upon Earth was confined) than that theſe ſame *Jews*, for the moſt part, received him not; being inſtigated to deſpiſe and reject this greateſt Meſſenger of the beſt Tidings of Salvation and Grace, becauſe of the total Diſappointment he gave to their worldly Ambition and Preferments, which they unwarrantably expected not only to hold, but to increaſe and multiply exceedingly, under the Civil Government and Reign of their Meſſiah.

And whereas it appears moreover through the whole Hiſtory of the New Teſtament, that theſe ſelfiſh Jews had vainly and criminally flattered themſelves, that the whole Intention and Benefits of the Meſſiah's Kingdom would be engroſſed by the *Hebrews*, and by ſuch Proſelytes who might be afterwards incorporated into their particular Community; in order to undeceive and contradict this their ſelfiſh and uncharitable Expectations, St. *John* declares in this Place, (in Conformity to the generous Predictions of the ancient Prophets) what was alſo very often repeated by the compaſſionate Saviour of the World, *viz.* That the high Character and Privilege of the Sons of God, given by Jeſus Chriſt to all who are intereſted in the new and better Covenant, of which he is the Mediator, extends only and univerſally to as many as receive him, even to them who believe in his Name.

And whereas the Subjects of Chriſt's ſpiritual Kingdom are not confined to one Nation, or a

ſmall

ſmall Part of Mankind only, as were the Subjects of the limited Conſtitution of the temporary Law of *Moſes*; ſo the Way and Means by which this greater Dignity and Advantage is acquired and conferred upon Men, is alſo totally different.

Under the Law diſpenſed by *Moſes*, Men were born and (in the Language of St. *Paul*) became Jews by Nature, *Gal.* ii. 15. whereas under the better Conſtitution of the Grace of God, diſpenſed by his Son from Heaven, Men do and muſt become Chriſtians, actively and univerſally, by believing in his Name, and by receiving and owning him in our perſonal and voluntary Profeſſions as the Son of God, and the conſequent Lawgiver and Judge of Mankind.

In the firſt Epiſtle of *John*, the fifth Chapter and firſt Verſe, we read, *Whoever believeth that Jeſus is the Chriſt, is born of God.* And the Holy Ghoſt ſpeaketh the ſame Language by the ſame Apoſtle *John*, in his Goſpel, Chap. xii. 13. *viz.*—That the Sons of God, under the ſpiritual and more excellent Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, became inveſted with this great Privilege (not by Birth right, but) in Conſequence of their believing in the Name or Authority of Jeſus Chriſt, by receiving whom God has ſent from Heaven for their Lord, and by avowing themſelves to be his Subjects.

Who voluntarily contract this moſt honourable and happy Relation into which they are born, not (paſſively) of Blood (as were the natural-born *Jews*, and in the ſame Senſe and Manner in which God has made of one Blood all the Nations who dwelt upon all the Face of the Earth) nor of the Will of the Fleſh (by carnal Deſcent from the voluntary Concurrence of their Parents) nor of the Will of Man (by the arbitrary Imagination, Cuſtom, or Inventions of vain and preſumptuous Mortals;) but

Chriſtians

Chriſtians are born, ſaith St. *John*, of the Will of God, by the ſufficient Capacity and Evidence which the Divine good Pleaſure and Providence has given them to believe in the Name of the Son of God, and to receive and own him for their Lord, in the ſame Way, and by the ſame holy and profitable Rite which his great Wiſdom and Authority has inſtituted, and preſcribed to the perſonal Uſe and Improvement of his Diſciples.—Which in requiring our Bodies to be put under the Water, and raiſed again from this Element, holdeth forth in this very Act, and only authorized Manner of its Adminiſtration, the Faith of the baptized Perſon, in the Burial and Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt; together with his avowed Duty and Reſolution, as the profeſſed Diſciple of Chriſt, to die unto Sin, and to walk in Newneſs of Life, *Rom.* vi. 3, 4, 5.

The Truth and Importance of this Expoſition of the Words of St. *John* is ſtrongly preſumed, as well from its Harmony, with many Affirmations in the New Teſtament relative to the ſame Subject, as from its practical Uſe and important Meaning.—— But the Judgment of the worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital will be determined in favour of this Expoſition, when they ſhall find it confirmed with farther Evidence, and applied directly to his own Inſtitution and Rite of Baptiſm, by the Chriſtian Lawgiver himſelf, in his famous Conference with *Nicodemus*, recorded in *John* iii. 5. *Jeſus anſwered, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

But becauſe the Reputation and long eſtabliſhed Opinions and Cuſtoms of this World are found notoriouſly (and in ſad and common Experience) to prejudice and divert Men's Attention, even from the moſt clear and important Truths; it may

be neceſſary to ſome Perſons, and the Honour and Impartiality of the proper Judges of this humble and free Addreſs, will permit the Author to advance a new Paraphraſe and Expoſition of this whole Conference between Jeſus Chriſt and *Nicodemus*, which (as one would reaſonably expect it ſhould be) is ſuited to, and taken from, the particular Character, Prejudices and Situation of this *Phariſee* and Ruler of the *Jews*.

The ſeveral Parts of which are humbly preſumed to illuſtrate and ſupport each other, and all tend viſibly to the ſame practical Uſe and Concluſion.

And whereas an important Miſtake becomes more dangerous under the Cover of an Author of the firſt Merit and Reputation, which needs to be expoſed in a clear Light, leaſt it ſhould be overlook'd or implicitly receiv'd under the Sanction of a great Name; the Readers of this ſerious and free Addreſs, will find in the oppoſite Page, the Paraphraſe on this ſame Portion of ſacred Scripture, which has been exhibited by the late Dr. *Clark*, in order to aſſiſt their more impartial and ſatisfactory Judgment, by this Compariſon.

Dr.

Dr. Clarke's *Paraphraſe on* JOHN III.

1. NOW among thoſe who were convinced by the Miracles which Jeſus worked at *Jeruſalem*, that he was really a divine Prophet, an extraordinary Teacher ſent immediately from GOD, was one *Nicodemus*, a *Phariſee*, an eminent Man among the *Jews*, and one of their great Council.

V. 1. *There was a Man of the Phariſees named* Nicodemus, *a Ruler of the* Jews.

2. This Man, though for Fear of the *Jews* he durſt not openly own the Perſuaſion he had entertained concerning Jeſus; yet deſiring to be further inſtructed in the Nature and Certainty of that Doctrine, which he ſaw accompanied with ſuch wonderful and undeniable Evidence; he went privately to Jeſus in the Night, and deſired to confer with himſelf about the Matters of Religion, ſaying: Sir, we are fully ſatisfied that you are not an ordinary Teacher, but a Prophet ſent immediately from God with ſome particular Meſſage; for the Things which you do, appear evidently to be the Effects of nothing leſs than a ſupernatural and divine Power. I deſire therefore you would be pleaſed to inſtruct me more fully and particularly what that Doctrine is which you are ſent into the World to teach, and which you confirm and prove by ſuch mighty Works.

2. *The ſame came to Jeſus by Night, and ſaid unto him: Rabbi, we know that thou art a Teacher come from God, for no Man can do theſe Miracles that thou doeſt except God be with him.*

3. Jeſus

New Paraphraſe and Expoſition on JOHN III.

1. 2. NICODEMUS, a *Phariſee* and Ruler of the *Jews*, in order to eſcape the Reſentment of his unbelieving and enraged Countrymen, and that he might continue to hold the Credit and Authority of this great Station among them, came to Jeſus by Night, with this private Confeſſion of his Faith in him, ſaying; Maſter, we know that you are a Teacher come from God, for no Man can do the Miracles which you perform (daily and publickly) without a Commiſſion and ſupernatural Power from God to effect ſuch marvellous Works.

3. Jeſus replied: The Doctrine which I teach, is in ſhort this; That whoſoever will inherit eternal Life, muſt, in order to qualify himſelf for that happy State, be born again. Signifying by an eaſy Compariſon, that a wicked Man, before he can be capable of entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, muſt of Neceſſity make ſo great a Change and Alteration in the whole Courſe of his Life, as may fitly be called a New-Birth.

3. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born again he cannot ſee the Kingdom of God.*

4. But *Nicodemus* groſsly miſunderſtanding Jeſus's Words, as if he had meant literally a natural and carnal Birth, anſwered; How can a Man of full Age be born again? Is it poſſible that ſuch a one ſhould enter the ſecond Time into his Mother's Womb and be born a-new, as a Child?

4. Nicodemus *ſaith unto him; how can a Man be born when he is old? Can he enter a ſecond Time into his Mother's Womb and be born?*

5. Jeſus ſaid, No; How can you put ſo abſurd a Meaning upon my Expreſſions? I did not mean a new Birth in a natural, but in a moral Senſe; that a Man muſt be entirely changed from all the corrupt Opinions he has before entertained, and from whatever wicked Practices he has formerly been guilty of, and enter upon a perfect new Courſe of Life: That he muſt be baptized into the Profeſſion of the true Religion, which God is about to reveal to Man-

5. *Jeſus anſwered, Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.*

kind

3. To which juſt Confeſſion of his Faith (becauſe it was made privately, and with his faulty Cowardice) our Lord returns an Anſwer well calculated to cure his Prejudice, and to remove his Miſtake, *viz.* That except a Man (of the like Character and Circumſtances with *Nicodemus* the *Jew*) was born again, (and become a ſecond Time a Child of God, or one of his peculiar and covenanted People) he could not ſee (the true Deſign and better Conſtitution of) that Kingdom of God, which was not of this World, like the civil Government and Theocriſy of the *Jews*, and which the Meſſiah had newly begun to manifeſt and ſet up among them, by the Luſtre and Authority of his Miracles.

4. *Nicodemus* groſsly miſunderſtanding the Words of Jeſus, as if he had meant, that Chriſtians were to beget and deſcend from Chriſtians, as the natural-born *Jews* had deſcended from the Patriarchs by lineal and carnal Propagation; replies accordingly, with an Air of Aſtoniſhment, How can a Man of full Age be born again? Is it poſſible that ſuch a one ſhould enter the ſecond Time into his Mother's Womb, and be born a-new as a Child?

5. Jeſus anſwered, No, every Chriſtian muſt be born and made ſuch through his perſonal Faith in the Meſſiah, demonſtrated to his own reaſonable Conviction by the Wiſdom and Power of the Holy Ghoſt; and having firſt acquired this neceſſary Belief, he muſt then confeſs it (not privately by Night as you have done, through criminal Shame or Fear) but openly before Men, and with the Rite and Vow of that Baptiſm which I have inſtituted by divine Appointment for this very Purpoſe, *John* iv. 1, 2. *For, verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, except a Man be thus born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, or become regularly, and according to the Letter and Spirit of my Goſpel, a Member*

kind; and that ſuitably to this Obligation, he muſt be throughly purified from all worldly and carnal Luſts, and muſt univerſally conform himſelf in Mind and Life, to obey all the holy Precepts of that Religion, under the Guidance and Aſſiſtance of the divine Spirit, which God will be always ready to beſtow on thoſe who ſincerely deſire to obey his Commandments. This, I ſay, is neceſſary, in order to a Man's attaining eternal Life; and without this, he can never enter into the Kingdom of God.

6. Were it poſſible that a Man could ever ſo often be born again, in that groſs Senſe wherein you underſtand me, do you think that this could avail any Thing towards qualifying him to have an Inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven? No: The Effect can be but anſwerable to the Cauſe: A natural Birth can give a Man no other Title than only to this natural, mortal Life; and if he was thus to be born again a thouſand Times, yet he would not be thereby at all the nearer to Immortality. But if a Man be renewed in the Spirit of his Mind; if he be delivered from the Dominion of fleſhly Luſts; if he governs his Life, not by the Motions of Senſe, but by the Dictates and Rules of Reaſon, and the Laws of God; hereby he

6. *That which is born of the Fleſh, is Fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.*

Member and Subject of that ſpiritual Kingdom, which God has ſent me into the World to publiſh and confirm in his Name, and to inveſt Men with its great Privileges, by inviting them to the Faith and open Profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

6. Nor think the generous Privileges and Effects of my Goſpel will be diſpenſed in the ſame Way, or depend upon the ſame natural Relation or civil Qualifications which are only poſſible to one ſingle People or Nation in all the Earth. That which is born of the Fleſh is Fleſh, (*i. e.*) the limited and temporary Privileges of God's ancient People the Jews, have indeed been entailed, and deſcended by Birth from Parents to their Children.——Whereas that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit, (*i. e.*) the Kingdom of the Meſſiah, which God the Father Almighty hath ſent me his Son from Heaven to ſet up and eſtabliſh among Men, is demonſtrated to their Faith, and recommended to their Acceptance, by the Wiſdom and Power of the Holy Ghoſt, as well by its own moſt excellent Conſtitution and moral Influence, as in the exact and continued Accompliſhment of Scripture Prophecies, and by the Sight and Fame of publick and benevolent Miracles (which brought even you, *Nicodemus*, to this Conference; and in Spight of the Age and Strength of your Prepoſſeſſions, as a *Phariſee* and

is become indeed a ſpiritual Man, entitled to Immortality, and fitly prepared to be an Inheritor of the Kingdom of God.

7. And do not wonder, that I called this ſecret and inviſible Renewal of the Life and Mind, by a Name which ſeems to ſignify ſo very great and ſenſible a Change, as that of a New Birth.

7. *Marvel not that I ſaid unto thee, Ye muſt be born again.*

8. For though it is not indeed a ſenſible and viſible Change, yet it is really and properly as great and true a Change, and is attended with more conſiderable and more laſting Effects, than is the natural Birth of a Child into the World. Neither is there any Thing incredible in all this, nor contrary to Reaſon: For even in the natural World, there are many Things in themſelves ſo ſubtle, that we cannot at all diſcern them with our Eyes, which yet are very

8. *The Wind bloweth where it liſteth, and thou heareſt the Sound thereof, but canſt not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: So is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

manifeſt

Ruler of the *Jews*, have extorted your private Confeſſion, that I am a Teacher come from God.)

7. Do no wonder that I ſaid unto thee, that you (*Jews*) muſt be born again, and become, a ſecond Time, the Children and covenanted People of God, before you can be Chriſtians, or inveſted with the better Promiſes and Hopes of my Goſpel; which being ordained by the free and unlimited Grace of God, to enlighten the Gentiles, no leſs than to conclude in the Glory of his ancient People *Iſrael*, *Luke* ii. 32. the Qualifications of its Members, the Privileges of its Subjects, and the Gate and Way which introduceth Men to this new and ſpiritual Kingdom of God, ſhall be the ſame through all Ages, and equally practicable and ſet open to every intelligent Creature, who is rightly diſpoſed and qualified to enter into it; *viz.* Who believeth in my Name, and is baptized into the Profeſſion of my Goſpel, whether he be *Jew* or *Gentile*, or the natural and immediate Offspring of believing or unbelieving Parents.

8. For in like Manner as the Wind bloweth where it liſteth, *&c.* ſo it is with every one who is born of the Spirit. He is born and made a Chriſtian through his perſonal Faith and Profeſſion of the Truth and Excellence of Chriſtianity, demonſtrated to his own Underſtanding and Conviction, by the Evidence of Miracles and Prophecy, and by thoſe inward Characters of Wiſdom and Purity, with which the Spirit of God has already, and will hereafter, more abundantly reveal and confirm it.

The Manner in which the Spirit of God has already, and will further operate, in revealing and confirming my Goſpel, is indeed inviſible to your mortal Sight; but the Effects of theſe ſpiritual

manifeſt and very great in their Effects. The Wind is a Thing altogether inviſible, and no Man can behold its Motion, even when it blows with the greateſt Violence: Yet that there is ſuch a Thing, is evident enough; and the Effects of it are ſufficiently known. Thus therefore that Regeneration or Renewal of the Heart and Manners, which is worked in a Man by the Efficacy of true Religion, and the Operation of the Spirit of God, though in itſelf it be inviſible, and not at all diſcerned by Senſe, yet in its Effects it is a very great and plain Thing, and really as manifeſt and conſiderable a Change, to all the Purpoſes of Eternal Life and Happineſs, as the Birth of a Man is in reſpect of this mortal Life.

9. *Nicodemus*, uſed to the outward Pomp of Ceremonies, and the formal Obſervation of *Jewiſh* Rites, ſo that he could not preſently raiſe his Mind above his ſtrong Prejudices, to the Apprehenſion of ſpiritual and moral Doctrines, replied: Sir, I profeſs I do not yet underſtand what you mean, or how theſe Things can be.

9. Nicodemus *anſwered and ſaid unto him, How can theſe Things be?*

10. Jeſus

Operations are both ſenſible and mighty.——And although this Revelation of the Wiſdom and Power of the Holy Ghoſt, by which I ſpeak and act, in the great Character of your promiſed Meſſiah, is now confined to my perſonal Miniſtry, in your City of *Jeruſalem*, and in the narrow Limits of the Land of *Judea*, yet the Knowledge and Bleſſings of my Goſpel ſhall not be limited or controuled by your falſe and ungenerous Expectations; it ſhall be preached to every Creature, and the Evidence given by the Spirit of God to this beſt and unlimited Diſpenſation of his Will, ſhall be preſerved by the Care, and propagated by the Conveyance of his gracious Providence, to the End of Time, and to the uttermoſt Parts of the Earth, *Mark* xvi. 15. Which from a Grain of Muſtard ſhall flouriſh into a great Tree, *Mat.* xiii. 31, 32. and thus go on to increaſe and multiply, 'till at laſt it ſhall become the univerſal Religion and Bleſſing of Mankind.

In like Manner as the Wind, which you know is altogether inviſible (and no Man muſt pretend to direct or ſtop its Motion) ariſeth gently at firſt from one ſmall Part of the Heavens, till with an increaſing Progreſs it ſweeps over the Face of the Earth, with the moſt ſenſible and mighty Effects.

9. *Nicodemus* ſtill retaining his Partiality to the *Jews*, and loath to apprehend the Privileges of the Meſſiah's Kingdom to be deſigned and tendered by the Grace of God in common to the Gentiles, perſiſts with an Air of Aſtoniſhment to make this ſhort Reply, How can theſe Things be?

10. Jeſus anſwered, * What is there in all that I have yet ſaid, which an ordinary *Jew*, much more one of the Great Council, might not well underſtand? Do you not yourſelves make Proſelytes by waſhing them with Water, and count them new-born Perſons? And as for that inward Holineſs and Purity I ſpeak of, have not the Prophets foretold, that God will plentifully communicate his Spirit in the Days of the Meſſiah for that Purpoſe?

10. *Jeſus anſwered and ſaid unto him, art thou a Maſter of* Iſrael, *and knoweſt not theſe things?*

11. Aſſuredly I tell you, though your Prejudices are ſuch that ye will not underſtand and embrace my Doctrine, yet the Things which I have ſpoken, are both in themſelves eaſy to be underſtand, and reaſonable to be practiſed; and moreover the Miracles which ye have ſeen me work, are abundant Demonſtrations that what I ſay, is moſt certainly and infallibly true, and delivered with ſufficient Evidence and Authority to convince you.

11. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, we ſpeak that we do know, and teſtify that we have ſeen; and ye receive not our Witneſs.*

12. But if, notwithſtanding all this, ye believe me not, even in theſe plain, obvious Things, which I have ſuited to your Capacities, and delivered in eaſy Compariſons, drawn from the moſt natural and common Things here on Earth; how much leſs will ye believe me,

12. *If I have told you earthly Things, and ye believe not, how ſhall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things.*

* The Paraphraſe on this Verſe is Dr. *Claget*'s.

when

10. Can you, replied Jeſus, who are of the Great Council in *Iſrael*, be ignorant of theſe Things? which have been ſo clearly ſpoken, and ſo often repeated in your own Law, and by all the ancient Prophets, but moſt remarkably in the very firſt Covenant, and in the beſt Part of the Promiſe given to your Father *Abraham*, *viz.* That in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth ſhall be bleſſed, (which Seed is Chriſt, and ſtiled accordingly the Deſire of all Nations.) *Hag.* ii. 7.

11. Though your former Prejudices may indiſpoſe you, *Nicodemus*, to underſtand and embrace this generous Doctrine, yet the Miracles which you have ſeen me work are abundant Demonſtrations, that what I have ſaid I know to be certainly and infallibly true, and delivered with Evidence and Authority ſufficient to convince you.

12. If I have told you earthly Things (or the Things relating to the Kingdom of God, which is ſet up on Earth and already come unto you, *Matt.* xii. 28. with the Illuſtration and Advantage of natural and ſenſible Compariſons) and notwithſtanding this, ye believe not; how much leſs would you have believed, if I had told you heavenly Things, without the Aid of ſuch Repreſentations and Similitudes,

when I tell you more ſublime and heavenly Myſteries? When I declare to you the Dignity of my Perſon, and the Dignity of my Office, the ſpiritual Nature of my Kingdom, and the Sufferings which I muſt firſt undergo for the Redemption and Salvation of Mankind?

13. Yet theſe Things are equally true and certain as the others; and the Works which I do are ſufficient Arguments, why ye ſhould believe me, even in theſe Things alſo. Chriſt, the * Son of Man, he who now talks with you † came from God, ſo as no other Prophet, no not *Moſes* himſelf ever did. For he was with God, before he came amongſt Men; and when he firſt appeared in the World, he had before had a Being before all Ages in Heaven; and continues ſtill in the ſame high Dignity. And 'tis the Prerogative of him only, who came thus from God, as no other ever did, throughly to underſtand, and to reveal to Men, the yet ſecret Counſels of God concerning the Eſtabliſhment of this Kingdom, and the Method of Mens Salvation.

13. *And no Man hath aſcended up to Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, even the Son of Man which is in Heaven.*

* That Son of Man deſcribed, *Dan.* vii. 13.

† This Paragraph is extracted from Dr. *Claget's.*

14.

litudes, which are more eaſy to your Conception, and more accommodated to your perſonal Character and Circumſtances?

13. And the Account which I give you of theſe heavenly Things, deſerves full Credit and your particular Regard: For no Man hath aſcended up to Heaven to fetch back this important Information; whereas the Works which I do, ſupport the Credit of my Aſſertion, when I inform you that he who came down from Heaven, even myſelf, the Son of Man, who now ſpeaks to you, have been in Heaven*.

* The *Engliſh* Tranſlators have, in this Verſe, put into the Mouth of Jeſus Chriſt (who in the Confeſſion of his Enemies, ſpoke as never Man ſpake, *John* vii. 46.) this ſtrange Language, *viz.* That he was ſent and came down from Heaven without leaving it, and remained in that moſt high and glorious Place, even in the State of his deep Humility, and while he dwelt on Earth; whereas theſe ſame Tranſlators, where the falſe Credit of their Orthodoxy was not endangered, have preſerved the neceſſary Senſe and true Idiom of the *Greek* Teſtament, by rendering τυφλόσων I was blind, though expreſſed in the Preſent Tenſe by St. *John* ix. 25. And even the late Dr. *Clark* ſeems himſelf to have ſhuffled over the ſame Difficulty, when he gave his Readers Dr. *Clagett*'s Paraphraſe on this Verſe, inſtead of his own.

14. and 15. This * divine Perſon ſhall, by his Sufferings and Death, accompliſh the Redemption and Salvation of Men: Opening an Entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven, to all thoſe who ſhall ſincerely obey him. And this ye ought not to be ſurprized at, as a new and ſtrange Doctrine; ſince ye have a Repreſentation and Prediction of it, even in your own Law. For as *Moſes* ſet upon a Pole in the Wilderneſs, the Image of a Serpent, which, being indeed the Figure of a venomous Beaſt, yet was ſo far from having any of its poiſonous Nature, that on the contrary, all thoſe who had been bitten by real Serpents, were immediately healed by looking up towards this Image: So the Son of Man, being made in the Likeneſs of ſinful Fleſh, yet having really no Sin in him, ſhall be lifted upon the Croſs; that, by the Power of his Death, ſinful Men believing in him, and being enabled to conquer and forſake their Sins, may obtain Remiſſion of Sins, and everlaſting Life.

14. ¶ *And as* Moſes *lifted up the Serpent in the Wilderneſs, even ſo muſt the Son of Man be lifted up.*

15. *That whoſoever believeth in him, ſhould not periſh, but have eternal Life.*

* Thus Jeſus often ſpeaks of himſelf in the third Perſon.

16.

14, 15. Know thou, and be aſſured of the important, generous, and extenſive Deſign of my coming into the World, by another ſenſible Repreſentation and Prediction; for which I refer you to the Hiſtory of *Moſes*, and which I take from the Records of your own Law. For, as by the Appointment of God, when *Moſes* ſet upon a Pole in the Wilderneſs, the Image of a Serpent, all Perſons who had been bitten with real Serpents, were immediately healed upon their looking up towards this Image: So the Son of Man ſhall be lifted up on the Croſs (according to this ancient Prefiguration, and the like gracious Appointment of God) that by this conſpicuous Proof of his generous and virtuous Sufferings, and the following Evidence and Glory of his Reſurrection and Dominion, ſinful Men, (both *Jews* and *Gentiles*) being brought to believe in him, and ſincerely to obey his Goſpel, they might all aſſuredly obtain the ſame great and common Salvation, *viz.* Remiſſion of Sins, and everlaſting Life through the Redemption which is in Jeſus Chriſt.

16. For

16. ¶ For the good and merciful God, the all-wiſe and compaſſionate Creator of all Things, pitying the miſerable and undone Condition, into which Mankind had plunged themſelves by Sin; merely of his own infinite Bounty and Tenderneſs, when there was no other Hopes of their Recovery, vouchſafed to ſend into the World his beloved and only begotten Son, to reveal his Will to them more clearly, to give himſelf a Sacrifice and Propitiation for their paſt Sins, and to purchaſe a new Covenant of Salvation for them, upon the gracious Terms of Faith, Repentance, and ſincere Endeavours of Obedience for the future.

16. ¶ *For God ſo loved the World that he gave his only begotten Son, that whoſoever believeth in him ſhould not periſh, but have everlaſting Life.*

16. For (however the falſe and ungenerous Prejudices of you *Jews*, would contract and monopolize to yourſelves, the whole Deſign and Effects of the Grace of God, diſpenſed through the Miniſtry and Mediation of the Meſſias) yet in Truth, *Nicodemus*, the good and merciful God, the all-wiſe and compaſſionate Creator of all Things, pitying the corrupt and miſerable State of his degenerate People the *Jews*, no leſs than of his natural Offspring the idolatrous Heathens, has vouchſafed merely of his own good Will and tender Compaſſion, to ſend into the World, his beloved and only begotten Son, to republiſh his Will to Mankind, with new Credentials and more abundant Inſtructions and Encouragements for their Recovery and higheſt Improvement, to give himſelf a Sacrifice and Propitiation, as well to incourage their Reformation, as for the Security of their Pardon; and in the Name of his heavenly Father, to become the Mediator and Diſpenſer of a new and better Covenant of Salvation and everlaſting Life, to all Men, who to the End of the World ſhall accept this great Salvation, upon the Terms of Faith, Repentance, and their ſincere Endeavours of Obedience to the preſcribed Rules of their Duty, and the very beſt Means of their greateſt Improvement and Happineſs.

And then to the 22*d.* Verſe, (which cloſeth this famous Dialogue between Jeſus Chriſt and *Nicodemus*) the great Lawgiver and Saviour of the World perſiſteth to the ſame Effect, in affirming the unlimited Intention and Sufficiency of his Goſpel, to reclaim from the Dominion and Guilt of Sin, and to make capable of Salvation and eternal Life, even all Men without Exception, who through all ſucceeding Ages, and in every Nation, to the End of the World, ſhall be taught and perſuaded to believe and profeſs the Chriſtian Religion with Sincerity.

In laying before you this new Paraphraſe and Expoſition, the Author has kept his Eye on the diſtinguiſhed Character and Circumſtances of *Nicodemus* the *Phariſee* and Ruler of the *Jews*; and upon a cloſe Review of this intereſting Expoſition, he preſumes to recommend to your Notice and Judgment, the Connection and Harmony of its ſeveral Parts, their manifeſt Operation and Union in the ſame practical Uſe and Concluſion (which is not more agreeable to the governing Perfections of the common Parent and Lord of Mankind, than to the catholic Deſign and Spirit of Chriſtianity) and the conſiderable Illuſtration and Reference which appears through the whole, to the Occaſion and Subject of this preſent Addreſs, to the worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling-Hoſpital.

But if, in his Dialogue with *Nicodemus*, Jeſus Chriſt might be reaſonably ſuppoſed (by his Phraſe of being born of the Spirit) to have intended to expreſs ſomething more, or different from a Perſon's being made a Believer of his divine Miſſion and Doctrine, on the Evidence and Teſtimony of Miracles and Prophecy, with which the Chriſtian Religion has been revealed and eſtabliſhed, and which

the

the Chriſtian Lawgiver himſelf, no leſs than his inſpired Apoſtles, aſcribe evermore in the New Teſtament, to the Operation of the Spirit of God:

It ſtill remains to be conſidered and ſhewn, in what poſſible Senſe, an unthinking Infant can be truly affirmed, or even conceived to be born of the Spirit.

If the Rite and Baptiſm of Water could be received inſenſibly and paſſively, according to the true Intent and Obligation of this Chriſtian Inſtitution, certainly the Evidence which has been given by the Spirit of God to the Truth and Excellence of our holy Religion, can never be ſuppoſed or made to appear to the Infant Seed of a Believer, rather than an Infidel; whereas theſe are the divine Words pronounced by the great Chriſtian Lawgiver, and recorded for the Inſtruction and Obedience of his Subjects, *viz. Except a Man be born, not of Water only, but of the Spirit alſo, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God*, John iii. 5. *i. e.* He cannot otherwiſe be inveſted regularly, and according to the true Intent and Preſcription of the Goſpel, with the Character and Privileges of a Chriſtian, before and without he poſſeſſeth theſe two Scripture Qualifications. And the Wiſdom and Honour of the worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital, will not permit them, knowingly or raſhly, to put aſunder, or cauſe to be ſeparated by their Direction and Patronage, what once they have found to have been expreſsly and inſeparably joined together, by the Wiſdom and Authority of the Son of God, and the only Chriſtian Lawgiver.

But finding ourſelves to be reaſonably convinced and ſatisfied of the Truth and Authority of the New Teſtament, by the excellent Inſtructions and well atteſted Miracles, with which the Spirit of God

God has abundantly proved the Faith, and ſupported the Hope of each intelligent Chriſtian; may it be the Wiſdom and Piety of every ſuch Believer, to fulfil the Duty, and to receive the Improvement and Satisfaction of our Lord's Inſtitution, by ſubmitting himſelf voluntarily and joyfully to be baptized in Water, in Token of his profeſſed Faith in the Burial and Reſurrection of Jeſus Chriſt, and of his Duty and Reſolution, as his avowed Diſciple, to die unto Sin and live unto Newneſs of Life, *Rom.* vi. 3, 4, 5.

That being thus born and made Chriſtians, as well by Water as by the Spirit, we may all enter into the Kingdom of God, through the Gate which his great Wiſdom and Grace have ſet open to us, walking in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord blameleſs; in the very Way which the greateſt and beſt Being has been pleaſed himſelf to mark out, with our avowed Reverence and Affection to the Chriſtian Lawgiver, and the compaſſionate Saviour of the World; and from our own plain and wiſe Conviction of our Chriſtian Duty, Privilege and Intereſt.

This certainly is the plain and only Way, in which we can reſemble the primitive Chriſtians, who were firſt converted to the Belief and Profeſſion of the ſame holy Religion, by the Apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt, and who acted herein by the immediate Direction and Authority of the inſpired Miniſters of the Goſpel, whom the great Apoſtle of the *Gentiles* addreſſeth in exact Conformity to the Expoſition (exhibited in this humble Addreſs) of the Decree of the Holy Ghoſt, recorded by St. *John*, and of the poſitive Sentence from the Mouth of the Chriſtian Lawgiver himſelf, to *Nicodemus*, in the following Words, *viz.*—*For ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt—For as many of you as have been baptized*

baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, have put on Chriſt—And if ye be Chriſt's then are ye Abraham's *Seed, and Heirs according to the Promiſe*, Gal. iii. 26, 27, 29.

It is the common and well grounded Belief of all who truly call themſelves Chriſtians, that the Apoſtles of Jeſus Chriſt did fully know, and have faithfully executed the Intention of their divine Commiſſion.

If it had been the Mind and Will of their great Maſter, that his inſtituted Rite of Baptiſm ſhould have been adminiſtred to the Children of believing Parents, during the Time of their Infancy and total Incapacity of believing and profeſſing the Goſpel; if this may be ſuppoſed, truly there can be no Room to doubt, but this Inſtitution of Jeſus Chriſt was really adminiſtred to ſome Subjects, before they did or poſſibly could believe in his Name; even by the Hands of his inſpired Miniſters themſelves, whom he qualified and commanded perſonally to go into all Nations (without Diſtinction) teaching and baptizing them.

But whereas the Chriſtian Church in *Galatia* had been planted and continued to flouriſh many Years before the Date of St. *Paul*'s Epiſtle to them, of Neceſſity there muſt have been many among them (upon the foregoing Suppoſition) to whoſe Infant Seed the Rite of Chriſtian Baptiſm had been already applied, by the Hands, or under the immediate Notice and Direction of Chriſt's Apoſtles: But the Fact itſelf deſtroys this Suppoſition, which is proved to be arbitrary and falſe, as well by the total Silence of the New Teſtament (in which not one direct Precept or Example appears to ſupport it) as by theſe direct and poſitive Aſſertions of St. *Paul*, with which the Practice of Infant-Baptiſm can ſurely never be reconciled. *For ye are all* (ſaith the in-

ſpired Apoſtle to the Chriſtians of *Galatia*) *the Children of God by Faith in Jeſus Chriſt*——which could not have been truly and thus univerſally ſpoken, if any of them had been, at this Time, made the Children of God without that Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, of which every Infant is, at all Times, utterly incapable.

The Apoſtle goes on to ſupport the Neceſſity of Faith in Jeſus Chriſt, in order to contract this new and happy Relation: *For as many of you as have been baptized into Jeſus Chriſt, have put on Chriſt.* But it is humbly ſubmitted to the great Penetration and Judgment of the worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling-Hoſpital, with what Senſe or Truth, a baptized Infant may be ſaid to put on Chriſt, who ſeems (at the moſt) to be hereby but impoſed upon him; and how was it poſſible for the inſpired Apoſtle to affirm more directly or plainly, That every baptized Chriſtian throughout the Church of Jeſus Chriſt in *Galatia*, was made and became ſuch knowingly, and by his own voluntary Act and ſolemn Profeſſion.

And whereas theſe primitive Chriſtians, having avowed themſelves univerſally to be the Subjects of Jeſus Chriſt, both by their Faith and Baptiſm, this gave good Cauſe to pronounce them all (in the ſpiritual and beſt Senſe) to be the Seed of *Abraham* (the farther and moſt eminent Example of all who believe the Promiſes of God) and Heirs of the eternal Inheritance, which the Son of God from Heaven, has expreſsly revealed and promiſed at the End of the World, will beſtow upon all baptized Chriſtians, who in Obedience to the Authority, and by the ſolemn Rite of his own Inſtitution, have perſonally avowed their Faith and Allegiance to him.

Provided always, that they cancel not this great Title, nor render themſelves unworthy and incapable of ſuch pure and undefiled Rewards, by

returning preſumptuouſly, and by continuing in a Courſe of impenitent Folly and Vice. But who, by their patient Continuing in well doing, abide grounded and ſettled in the Faith, nor ſuffer themſelves to be finally and irrecoverably moved away from the immenſe and joyful Hope of the Goſpel.

The Author begs Leave to reſt the Merit and Importance of this free and humble Addreſs, on the Proofs and Evidence which have been advanced herein, from the repeated Inſtructions and Authority of the New Teſtament, *viz.*

That the prevailing Cuſtom of Infant Baptiſm is diſcountenanced by the total Silence of the Word of God; that it is manifeſtly incompatible with the moral Qualifications and Benefits which are found annexed to the Rite of Chriſtian Baptiſm, in the Scripture Hiſtory and Inſtitution; and every Plea which has been, or can be brought to excuſe or juſtify this Practice, is before-hand over-ruled and made ineffectual, by the moſt direct Inſtructions and Decree of the Holy Ghoſt, pronounced by the Son of God himſelf, and both repeated and recorded in his Name, by his inſpired Apoſtles.

In this, and in every poſſible Caſe reſpecting our perſonal Duty and the great Demands of Religion, every Man is (or ſhould be) to himſelf, his own proper and impartial Judge; but, to every Perſon who has viewed what has been advanced in this Addreſs on this Subject of pure Revelation, in a clear and ſatisfactory Light; to every Believer poſſeſſed of ſuch Convictions, theſe Conſequences will be manifeſt and irreſiſtable, *viz.*

That all Perſons believing the divine Authority, the moral Qualifications, and the great Privilege and Benefits which are annexed in the New Teſtament of Jeſus Chriſt to his own Rite and Inſtitution of Baptiſm, become bound in Duty and Intereſt

(and in Conſequence of this their own rational Belief) to obey herein the Authority they acknowledge, to acquire and exerciſe theſe ſame worthy and ſuitable Diſpoſitions, and to experience the Improvement and Conſolation, the Privilege and great Benefits which are promiſed expreſly and will evermore accrue, to all who diſcharge this their Chriſtian Duty, with a pious and upright Intention,

But if we have truly ſeen above, from the Teſtimony of St. *John*, and the poſitive Sentence of Jeſus Chriſt, that no Baptiſm is, or can be effectual, to inveſt any Perſon with the Character and Privilege of a Chriſtian, except and before that ſame Perſon is born of the Spirit, and thus brought to believe the Truth and Authority of the Chriſtian Religion; if from the Declaration and Teſtimony of St. *Paul*, we have found, moreover, that at the very Time when this Apoſtle wrote and directed his Epiſtle to the Church of Chriſt in *Galatia*, not one Perſon was, or had been incorporated in this Church, who was either incapable to acquire, or had refuſed to make a perſonal Confeſſion of his Faith in Jeſus Chriſt——Upon the Credit of theſe ſeveral Facts and Affirmations recorded in the New Teſtament, it becomes the avowed and ſerious Freedom of this Addreſs, to declare further what demands the publick Attention of all Proteſtant Chriſtians, *viz.*

That no Believer of the divine Authority of Chriſt's Inſtitution, can be juſtified in ſuffering himſelf to be prevented of his perſonal Duty and Satisfaction in receiving it, becauſe of that paſſive Baptiſm which he may have received already, or which (to ſpeak ſtrictly) has been impoſed on him inſenſibly, in the Time, and during the Incapacity of his Infancy.

The common Application of this Rite and Inſtitution of our moſt reaſonable and divine Religion,

to improper and incapable Subjects, is, in the Author's deliberate Apprehenſion, a manifeſt and important Error, which greatly threatens to prevent and deſtroy its uſeful and intended Effects.——And to this particular Addreſs, to the worthy Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling Hoſpital, he begs Leave to join his humble and affectionate Addreſs, to his Chriſtian Brethren of every Denomination, That every Perſon intereſted in this Queſtion, may be diſpoſed and enabled to anſwer it with juſt Satisfaction and Profit to himſelf, by obeying and receiving this holy Rite and Duty of our common Chriſtianity, with ſuitable Gratitude and Joy, which the Authority and Love of Jeſus Chriſt has ſo wiſely calculated to oblige and incourage all Believers in his Name, to a more ſerious and diligent Examination of the Truth and Excellence of his Goſpel, which hereby we more ſolemnly profeſs.—To render more ſincere and determined, our penitent and good Reſolutions—To give us a more lively Senſe of our Chriſtian Duties and Privileges.—To fix deeper in our Minds, the ſeveral Privileges of our divine Religion, and to render them more fruitful in our Lives.——That it may be to us (what it never fails to be to all who worthily receive it) the Baptiſm of Repentance, and Forgiveneſs of Sins, and the joyful Pledge and Aſſurance of the Remiſſion of all our preceding Follies and Crimes.---And that in God's own appointed Way, we may all truly ſeek, and happily find, his promiſed Bleſſing and Aſſiſtance, to ſucceed greatly this perſonal and ſolemn Profeſſion of our Chriſtianity, to our ſpiritual Improvement and Hope in this World, until it ſhall conclude in our immenſe Reward, and never-ceaſing Happineſs in that which is to come.

Finally, the Author begs Leave to remind the moſt Noble the Right Honourable and Worthy Truſtees

Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling-Hoſpital, that ſince the Reign of *Conſtantine the Great*, when firſt the Powers of this World were invited or broke into the Chriſtian Church, and before they began to thruſt out the ſacred Rights of private Conſcience, and the ſole Juriſdiction of Jeſus Chriſt, and the Canon Law of his New Teſtament, there has not yet appeared in Chriſtendom one national Church, but wherein the Wealth and Power and Miniſtry of the Clergy, eſtabliſhed by Law, have been made to depend on the Decrees and Licenſe of their Superiors, who have in all ſucceeding Times and Places, required their ſolemn Declarations, Subſcription and Conformity to the Articles and Creeds, to the Worſhip and Government, which from Time to Time, have been framed and impoſed upon them, by fallible and intereſted Men, as the neceſſary Introduction and Tenure of Church Preferment.

Similar Cauſes are followed by the ſame neceſſary Effects in the natural World, and the Effects which the like Circumſtances and Temptations occaſion, will be generally the ſame in the moral World alſo. The Ground, on which the Chief Prieſts and Rulers of the *Jews*, rejected and crucified their promiſed Meſſias, was not for Want of ſufficient Evidence or Conviction of his divine Miſſion; for upon the Sight and Report of the Reſurrection of *Lazarus* (the moſt intereſting and unqueſtioned Miracle) the Chief Prieſts and *Phariſees* are charged by the ſacred Hiſtorian, with gathering a Council, in which they ſaid, *What do we? For this Man does many Miracles. If we let him thus alone, all Men will believe on him, and the Romans ſhall come and take away both our Place and Nation*, John xi. 47, 48. All Bodies of Men are ſeen at all Times, and in all Caſes, to act the ſame in like Circumſtances, and with the Abatement of a few generous

generous Exceptions, the Herd of Mankind will be ever inclined and warped to any great and viſible worldly Intereſt; and although it muſt needs afflict greatly a generous Spectator, yet every Man who is accuſtomed to look around him, will expect to ſee the moſt ſtupid and ruinous Corruptions of Chriſt's Goſpel, zealouſly abetted and cheriſhed by his ſpecious Friends, on a far leſs Conſideration than that which induced the jealous Rulers and an intereſted Clergy, to murder the Lord of Life, and to hang upon a Tree the greateſt and beſt Perſonage who ever lived and appeared in this World.

Without Queſtion, this is the true Cauſe, which ſufficiently accounts for the better Reſolution and Succeſs, with which the Chriſtian Laity have commonly begun and effected each remarkable and public Meaſure of Reformation, in which the Chriſtian Clergy have been nevertheleſs more cloſely and ſolemnly intereſted by the Duty and Advantages of their Function, and the more popular and extenſive Influence of their Examples; but the Independence, no leſs than the high Rank and generous Condeſcenſion of the Truſtees and Governors of the Foundling-Hoſpital, which firſt incouraged this free and humble Addreſs, aſſures the Author of your Indulgence to this well-meant Freedom, however particular and unexpected, and that your Judgment and Candour herein, will be determined by the Evidence and Merit which may appear in the Premiſes: In which Confidence, your humble Monitor begs Leave to expreſs himſelf,

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Your moſt Reſpectful
and Obedient Servant,

VERAX.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Shortly will be ſent to the Preſs,

THE Principle and Teſt of the Chriſtian Faith and Profeſſion, *&c.*

BRITISH
13 0085
MUSEUM